

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 1-9 and 11-23 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 15 are independent. By this response, claim 10 is canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 1, 15-16, and 18 are amended. Claims 24 and 25 are newly added.

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Skala et al (USP 6,911,277 B2) (hereinafter “Skala”).

Claims 15-19 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being anticipated over Skala in view of Kzwazu (JP 07-235324) (hereinafter “Kzwau”).

Claims 22 and 23 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being anticipated over Skala in view of “Just the Basics: Fuel Cells.”

Claims 20 and 21 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 20 and 21 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

III. Pending Claims

Independent claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Skala.

The Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Skala at least because it recites, “an actuation module that actuates said switching member to open and close the outlet of the at least one gas conduit” and “wherein the actuation control module controls said

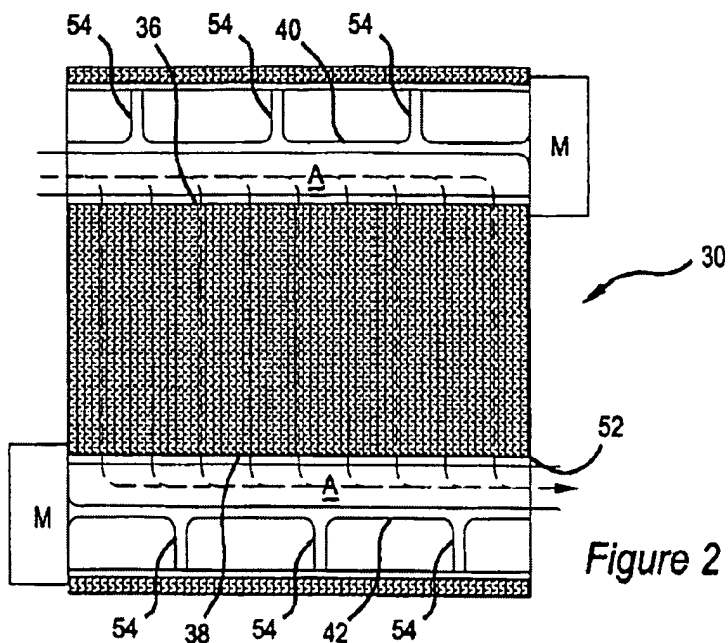
switching member first to narrow an opening area of the outlet of the at least one gas conduit to or toward zero and then to widen the opening area of the outlet of the gas conduit, thus generating pulsation of the gas conduit.” (emphasis added)

Independent claim 15 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being anticipated over Skala in view of Kzwazu.

The Applicant respectfully submits that claim 15 is patentable over the cited references at least because it recites “wherein the actuation control module controls said regulation modules to first close an opening area of the outlet opening area of the at least one of said manifolds and then widens the opening area, thus generating pulsation of the gas conduit.” (emphasis added)

Certain embodiments of the present application relate to an actuation module that actuates a switching member to open and close an outlet of a gas conduit. The actuation control module controls the switching member first to narrow an opening area of the outlet of the at least one gas conduit to or toward zero and then widens the opening area of the outlet of the gas conduit in order to generate pulsation. This arrangement—which controls the inner pressure of the gas conduit—can ensure efficient discharge of water droplets flocculated in the gas conduit to the outlet.

Skala shows, as seen in FIG. 2 (provided herein below) at reference letter A, a switching member 40 in a fully open position to allow gas to travel from one end of the manifold chamber 36 to another end, and through gas passages in the fuel cell stack. FIG. 3, sector B of the switching member 40, is provided with a single partition 54, which directs the flow of reactant gases in a three-path series-like flow configuration. However, in contrast to the present application, Skala does not close the opening area, and therefore cannot generate pulsation in the manner as required by the Applicant’s claims. Rather, Skala merely switches flowpaths, but does not open and close the flowpath to generate pulsation.



The Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least these reasons, claims 1 and 15, as well as their dependent claims, are patentable over the cited references.

IV. Conclusion

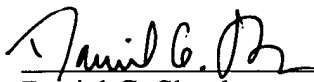
In light of the above discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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